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AUTHOR McKay, Shirley E.
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is the result of efforts made to gain an understanding of the slow learner in order to obtain background material for the future writing of a homemaking textbook, which will be geared to the needs and objectives of below average individuals. Included are discussions of such topics as: (1) What Is the Slow Learner Like, (2) Identifying The Slow Learner, (3) The Teacher Of The Slow Learner, (4) Working With The Slow Learner, (5) The Slow Learners In The Homemaking Class, and (6) Teaching Homemaking To The Slow Learner. Concluding statements and suggested emphasis areas and activities supplement the text. (SN)

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STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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SHIRLEY E. McKAY
DREXEL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
COLLEGE OF HOME ECONOMICS
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

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DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

ROBERT M. WORTHINGTON, ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

CURRICULUM LABORATORY

RUTGERS – THE STATE UNIVERSITY

BUILDING 4103 –KILMER CAMPUS

NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

## FOREWORD

After reading this thesis and recognizing the dearth of organized material having to do with the slow learner in homemaking education, it is my considered judgement that it should be made available to our teachers in New Jersey.

As a result this thesis has been published by the Curriculum Laboratory of the New Jersey Division of Vocational Education at Rutgers University.

Albert E. Jochen
Former Assistant Commissioner
Division of Vocational Education

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TABLE OF CONTENTS


| Chapter | Page |
|---|---|
| FOREWORD | i |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | ii |
| THE SLOW LEARNER | iv |
| INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSES | 1 |
| WHAT IS THE SLOW LEARNER LIKE? | 3 |
| IDENTIFYING THE SLOW LEARNER | 8 |
| THE TEACHER OF THE SLOW LEARNER | 12 |
| WORKING WITH THE SLOW LEARNER | 17 |
| THE SLOW LEARNER IN THE HOMEMAKING CLASS | 21 |
| TEACHING HOMEMAKING TO THE SLOW LEARNER | 23 |
| CONCLUSION | 29 |
| APPENDIX | |
| A. Suggested emphasis and activities for slow learners in the six areas of homemaking education | 32 |
| B. Hints on classroom management | 36 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 39 |

# THE SLOW LEARNER

"Let all who question the wisdom of education for 'all the children' remember that America has not heretofore provided education for all as a gift from a strong, wealthy, and good people, but rather has become strong, wealthy, and good because education has been provided for all the people."[1]

"In school, at home, no matter where, one must never forget that the slow learner is no less a 'person', no less an individual, than any other human being. His talents may be few, his promise slight, but he is none the less a member of mankind, cast in the same mold and made of the same clay. He claims equal right with others in the regard of his fellow men, and to guidance and instruction designed to stimulate his growth to the fullest stature his powers permit. He, too, must be helped to stand on his own feet and face the world, self-reliant and unafraid. 'With malice towards none, with charity for all' must be the teacher's watchword. Any other point of view denies the faith that has made America great."[2]

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[1]Featherstone, W. B., Teaching the Slow Learner (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1951), p. viii.

[2]Ibid., p. 118.

## INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSES

In the years since World War II, American educators have become more and more concerned with the problem of the slow learners in our schools. Although it may seem that the number of slow learners in our classrooms is on the increase, it is not essentially that we now have more slow learners, but rather that these children are now staying in school longer.

During the 20 years between 1931 and 1951, the proportion of youth remaining in high school until graduation almost doubled. Fifty-two out of each 100 pupils who were in the fifth grade in 1944 were graduated from high school in 1951. In 1930, the number of graduates was 29 out of 100; in 1900, 16; and in 1870, only 2.[3]

The slow learners were usually the first students to drop out of school, many of them not even reaching the secondary level. Even today the slow learner makes up a large proportion of the drop-outs. However, more of these students at present are staying in school with every intention to graduate. In a recent New Jersey survey, 29 per cent of the slow learning students questioned even plan to enter and finish college.[4] Although the realism of this goal could be doubted, it does show that the slow learning students are becoming more concerned with their future education.

Educators have long been aware of the slow learner and this child's needs. The information available, however, seems to be contradictory, not only on the characteristics of the slow learner, but also on the way this student should be handled.

Life is complicated enough in these hectic times for the average and above average person. Imagine how confusing and frustrating these same times must be for the person with below average intelligence and abilities!

Each student must be given an opportunity to develop to the fullest extent of his abilities. Each student must be taught to use all his abilities in order to live better. In this way, each person will become a useful and contributing member of our society.

The social and technological changes of our times require that the schools make more effective provisions for slow learners. Many slow learners end up

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[3] Statistical Summary of Education, 1949-50 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1953), p. 24, table 19.

[4] New Jersey Secondary Teachers Assoc., The Slow Learner in Secondary Schools (1961 Yearbook), p. 20.

in unskilled or semiskilled jobs. The competition for jobs of this type is continually increasing, whereas the number of unskilled and semiskilled job openings is decreasing. The advance of automation, in both industry and the home, means that machines are now performing the tasks that were once performed by the unskilled worker. In relation to this problem, Goldstein states the following:

> Preparing the slow learner for employment and equipping him with those skills that will make it possible for him to compete with his intellectual superiors then becomes a critical responsibility of the school. Watered-down courses and patch-work training in occupational and homemaking skills will no longer suffice. It is already mandatory that an effective program highly correlated with the real demands for social-occupational adjustment be developed. [5]

Since the American public schools are committed to helping each individual student reach his maximum potential, adequate provisions must be made for all students, including the slow learner. The schools must also develop in young people the skills that will enable them to find their place in the adult working world. The student with lower than average ability must be helped to develop those characteristics that employers value in their employees, such as reliability, cooperation, responsibility and loyalty.

In spite of all the problems related to the slow learner, comparatively little research has been done. Information about the slow learner is lacking, especially in the area of homemaking education. Increased interest in this type of student has demanded that more information on this subject be made available. The slow learner offers a special challenge to educators and much more research is needed before we can adequately meet her needs.

The long-range goal of this author is to gain an understanding of the slow learner as background material for the possible future writing of a homemaking textbook for the slow learner. Therefore, the purposes of this report are:

1. To determine the characteristics of the slow learner and her special problems, and

2. To suggest ways to deal with these problems in homemaking classes.

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[5] Goldstein, H., New directions for the slow learner, Education, 81:348, 1961, p. 350.

## WHAT IS THE SLOW LEARNER LIKE?

Who is the slow learner in the homemaking classroom? What is she like and how does she behave?

The slow learning child has been defined as one " . . . who, though capable of achieving a moderate degree of success, will do so at a slower rate with less than average efficiency."[6] It has been estimated that 17-20 out of every 100 students are slow learners.

Although experts in the field of education do not agree on definite I. Q. divisions, slow learners are generally thought of as those pupils with I. Q. 's below 91 and above 74.[7] Garrison and Force further identify the pupils with I. Q. 's below 91 as follows:

1. Totally dependent mentally handicapped - I. Q. 0-25
2. Trainable mentally handicapped - I. Q. 25-50
3. Educable mentally handicapped - I. Q. 50-75
4. Slow learners - I. Q. 75-90[8]

All slow learners have a consistently slow rate of academic learning. As Featherstone states, " . . . the term 'slow learner' should be interpreted consistently to mean slow in learning intellectual things."[9] Slow learners are not all slow in every activity, nor are they abnormal in all their characteristics. We should not assume that because a slow learner is slow in reading that she is slow in all things. However, because reading skill plays a large part in success in school, many of these students do not measure up to the standards set in academic subjects.

By the same token, there is no basis to assume that because a child is backward in intellectual abilities, that she makes up for this by being superior in manual skills. Slow learners usually show more interest in manual activities because these activities are more meaningful to them. Therefore, the level attained by the slow learner in manual activities seems high because

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[6]Good, C. V., (ed.), Dictionary of Education, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1945)

[7]Featherstone, W. B., op. cit., p. 2.

[8]Garrison, K. C., and Force, D. G. Jr., The Psychology of Exceptional Children (3rd ed.), (New York: The Ronald Press, 1959), p. 57.

[9]Featherstone, W. B., op. cit., p. 3.

it is usually much better than her success with academic subjects.

Certain characteristics are generally true of slow learners as a group, although individually they show greater variations than average students of the same age. In general, when compared to average students of the same age, they:

1. Are a little less well developed, a little less tall and heavy, less well proportioned, and exhibit considerably more frequent defects of hearing and speech, malnutrition, defective tonsils, adenoids, and defects of vision.

2. Are a little less well adjusted.

3. Have greater difficulty with abstractions; low performance in reasoning, defining, distinguishing, analyzing, generalizing.

4. Have a slow rate of learning.

5. Have a relatively short attention span.

6. Often have poor retentive ability.

7. Are easily confused by the introduction of too many requirements simultaneously.

8. Often lack sufficient imagination to initiate own activities.

9. Lack creativity, yet have a need to express themselves.

10. Tend to be timid, dependent and to show deference and self-distrust.

11. Like quick results, and are impatient and inclined to lose interest in the face of deferred or intangible returns.

12. When strongly motivated may perform considerably beyond expected limits.

13. Do not find repetitious or monotonous tasks distasteful. [10]

In addition to the above characteristics, a slow learner may be unable to understand and carry through directions or assignments, is unable to work independently and concentrate voluntarily, and may lack belief in his own worth

[10] National Education Association, Dept. of Home Economics, The Slow Learner in Homemaking Education (Washington, D. C., 1959), p. 5-6.

and ability. This child is usually inferior to the average child in speech and writing skills, would tend to have fewer ideas and may have difficulty in expressing herself.

The slow learner has a slightly greater tendency toward instability and insecurity, probably due to repeated failures and a general lack of success. Because of this insecurity, the slow learning student may be led to exhibit one or more of the following reactions: withdrawal, aggression, indifference, lack of interest, nervousness, or marked anxiety. At home this child may resort to minor illnesses to receive attention or to avoid regular school attendance.[11] A slow learner needs to be provided with success experiences so that she may attain a better adjustment.

Some studies indicate that over half of the slow learners are less adept in personal and social adjustments than brighter students. There is a tendency for slow learners to be rejected by their peers, usually because of their aggressive and unacceptable behavior. Many boys react to school failure by becoming aggressive, while girls are more apt to become withdrawn. The latter students cause the school less trouble, but they are a much greater challenge to the teacher.

While many slow learners do have personality problems, some are found to be well adjusted, relaxed and pleasant, in spite of school failures. In a recent survey of more than 1000 slow learning students in New Jersey, the results showed the following:

1. More than 92 per cent of the students questioned plan to finish high school.

2. Nearly all of these students felt that their parents wanted them to finish high school.

3. The majority of these students felt that their personal and social problems were no greater than other teenagers, and the girls were a bit more concerned about the existing problems than the boys were.

4. Four out of five of the slow learners questioned felt that their teachers were fair and knew their students well. Roughly, two out of three of these felt that the teachers were interested in the students and understood their abilities.

5. Most of these slow learners felt that their studies were fairly interesting, valuable, and not too difficult for them.[12]

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[11] Witty, P., Needs of slow learning pupils, Education, 81:331, 1961

[12] New Jersey Secondary Teachers Assoc., op. cit., pp. 19, 25, 33.

It is significant for homemaking teachers that this survey also showed that the things the slow learners thought to be the most important signs of success were having a happy and healthy family, having lots of good friends, being well known by many people, having a nice home in a nice area of the community, being in an important job where people work for you, having a lot of fun out of life, being an important person in the community, having lots of money, and having lots of things like a television set, new car, and new clothes.[13] The above items are listed in the order of the frequency chosen.

Homemaking teachers should be interested to know that the following topics were listed by the girls as those topics which they would most like to have discussed in school: dating, marriage, jobs and how to get them, sex relationships, family life, juvenile delinquency, personal abilities, planning and buying a home, and saving and budgeting money.[14] All of these topics could well be found within the homemaking curriculum.

In another survey, Bair reports that slow learners listed collecting as their favorite of a very limited number of hobbies. Sports, athletic activities, musical activities, club and committee work were the school activities most often selected. Their favorite reading materials were the easy to read variety of general and special interest materials such as Westerns, detective and mystery stories, and movie magazines. Shop was their best liked subject and they liked English the least. The slow learner's knowledge of world affairs was very limited and the need for guidance in all areas was indeed obvious.[15]

The type of school situation the slow learner faces has a definite bearing on whether or not this student finishes school. In a strictly academic environment where the student is always expected to do more than her capabilities permit, the slow learning student will probably become very discouraged and will tend to drop out of school at the earliest age legally possible. However, in the type of learning situation geared to her needs and abilities, the slow learner may become a valuable part of the school population. Not only may she graduate, but often she may contribute far more than one might expect from her limited abilities.

Slow learners tend to marry early, especially the females. The label is usually lost upon graduation and the slow learner usually takes her place in an unskilled or semiskilled job, marries, raises a family, and assumes her

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[13] New Jersey Secondary Teachers Assoc., op. cit., p. 28.

[14] Ibid., p. 35.

[15] Bair, G. M., Mentally Superior and Inferior Children in the Junior and Senior High School, (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1938)

share of adult responsibilities. It is wise to keep in mind that the future vote of the slow learner will count just as much as that of a person of greater ability. Educators, therefore, face a serious responsibility in helping prepare these students for their future roles as adult citizens, family members, and worthy employees in our society.

## IDENTIFYING THE SLOW LEARNER

Unless all students are routinely examined by a psychologist before entering school, the chief responsibility of the identification of a probable slow learner rests with the classroom teacher. Generally, however, these students are located in the early years of the elementary school through the administration of a group intelligence test. This test score, in conjunction with the child's school diagnostic record to date, his behavior, and observation of his problems and abilities will help to determine if the child is a slow learner.

Since the slow learner is usually located before the child reaches secondary school, the homemaking teacher is seldom involved in actual location and placement. However, it is important that the homemaking teacher knows and understands the procedure for identifying slow learners. Generally, there are four ways of doing this:

1. Examining the age-grade-progress record of the school and locating those pupils who are overage by more than a year and at the same time retarded in progress by more than a year.

2. Examining the past school achievement record of all such pupils for consistently mediocre attainments.

3. Administering two group intelligence tests or alternative forms of one test to all pupils if possible, but at least to all those listed as a result of 1 and 2 above.

4. Giving individual tests to all pupils if possible, but at least to those for whom the facts elicited by means of the procedures outlined above appear inconsistent or inconclusive.[16]

Group tests of intelligence are mostly screening devices. In elementary schools, the Lorge-Thorndike, Kuhlmann-Finch, California, and SRA Primary Mental Ability Tests are widely used. The two most popular group tests in high schools are the Differential Aptitude Tests and School and College Ability Tests.[17] Both of the last two tests yield a verbal and a non-verbal score. Students that consistently score above a 90 I. Q. on these tests cannot be classified as slow learners.

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[16]Featherstone, W. B., op. cit., p. 21.

[17]Dunn, L. M., The slow learner - an overview, NEA Journal, 48 (No. 7), p. 20.

Students scoring less than a 90 I. Q. on the above tests should be referred to a competent school psychologist for a comprehensive examination. In addition to administering such tests of scholastic aptitude as the Revised Stanford- Binet, Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children, and the Weschler Adult Intelligence Scale, the psychologist will use a wide battery of other instruments, including achievement tests, interest inventories, and tests of personality. This comprehensive examination is needed to diagnose successfully the slow learner as such, and to rule out such factors as emotional maladjustment, educational retardation, and extreme cultural deprivation as the primary responsibility.

Individual tests are expensive and time consuming. For example, it takes approximately one hour of a trained psychologist's time to administer a Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale and it takes equivalent amounts of time to administer other individual tests. For this reason, individual tests are usually given as a final step in the diagnostic process.[18]

In the identification of slow learners, tests need to be perfected that will go beyond academic aptitudes and physical coordination. The boundaries of the slow learner group are rather loose. At the bottom of the slow learner scale, the mentally handicapped child is not included, and at the top, a vague line separates the slow learner from a child of low average ability. A great many students are probably now improperly categorized. The U. S. Office of Education, through its Cooperative Research Program, is presently backing two research projects which are attempting to develop tests that will overcome verbal handicaps such as those suffered by pupils whose parents do not speak English in the home or those children from culturally deprived families where the vocabulary is severely limited. These pupils may mistakenly be labeled as lacking in innate ability, when their real problem is with the English language.[19]

Not to be overlooked is the observation of the students by the classroom teacher. A homemaking teacher, working closely with her students, will be able to recognize characteristics that may mean the child is a slow learner, even if she has not been identified as such. This is helpful when a new student comes into the classroom or where existing records are unavailable or incomplete. The following are some questions a homemaking teacher might ask herself when she is concerned about an individual student.

1. Can she read?

2. Can she work problems in arithmetic?

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[18]NEA, Research Div., The Education of the Slow learner, (Research Memo #24, Washington, D. C., 1959), p. 4.

[19]Derthick, L. G., Education of the slow learners, Education, 81:336, 1961

3. Does she have any particular personality problems?

4. Does she have any difficulties in seeing or hearing?

5. What kind of home and family life does she have?

6. What do school records show that her level of achievement is as compared with her general ability?

7. Does she have any possible organic causes for reta·dation?

8. What information can the school psychologist or guicance counselor supply?[20]

No student should be labeled a slow learner, however, until all other causes of functional slowness, such as poor health, unwholesome home or environmental conditions, lack of mentally stimulating experiences, or personality factors have been examined and, if possible, corrected.

The slow learner is often confused with the educable retarded child, or with the more capable student who is under-achieving because of behavior, personality or remedial problems. More studies must be made of individual pupils to determine why they learn slowly. Past studies have sometimes been profitable in determining that some slow learners are really borderline exceptional children whose physical handicaps, such as loss of sight, hearing, or chronic illness, have made them unable to keep up with their classmates in competitive learning situations. Other slow learners may have emotional problems which inhibit their learning. More research is needed in this area and this research should lead to specific remedial work with these pupils, in order to help them achieve their true potential.

The role of the parent is also important in identifying the slow learner. Parents and others may not fully understand what is meant by low intelligence. They often feel that if the child's speech problems were corrected, the intellectual problems would be solved - or that if she is slow that she can eventually learn just as much as the average child - or that the child is only slow in a limited area of learning - or that what she does eventually learn will be better retained. These ideas may or may not be accurate, but the parent must be given a realistic picture of the child's abilities and potential. Often one or both parents may be part of the slow learner's problems. Careful counseling and cooperation between the parent and the school are needed in order to recognize and help the slow student.

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[20] Liggett, M., and Sellers, B., They can learn..... if taught, Journal of Home Economics, 54:357, 1962

Cooperation between the parent and the school can usually be encouraged by conferences, visits, and telephone calls. Parents are apt to be anxious for reports on their slow child's progress, as they have probably faced many failures with the child themselves. Usually parents entertain strong hopes that the report will indicate progress, but whether it does or not, the parents have a right to know the truth. The personal conference is generally more satisfying to both the parent and the teacher than a report card using numbers or symbols that may confuse the parent.

Parents need all the help the school can give them in understanding differences in abilities and in planning to meet individual differences. If parents find the teacher is sincerely interested in helping their youngster attain success in school, they will probably be very cooperative.

## THE TEACHER OF THE SLOW LEARNER

Perhaps the most significant factor in determining success with the slow learner is the teacher. All teachers, of course, must have many positive attributes, but it is especially important that those teachers working with slow learners be:

1. Intellectually curious about the learning characteristics of slow learners.

2. Exceptionally able, ingenious, and creative in providing and adapting materials and methods to the various levels and types of slow learners.

3. Professionally and personally secure so that they can accept the limited capacities of slow learners and yet find satisfaction in their little successes.

4. Understanding and sympathetic and able to give considerable emotional support and approval.

5. Versatile and resourceful.[21]

In addition, the teacher will need to have a good deal of patience, a thorough understanding of human development, a willingness to devote time and ability to individual students, creativity and ingenuity in creating motivation for slow students, and an awareness of the strengths that are present to a varying degree in the group. Also, she must have a willingness to recognize and practice variability in standards, and a willingness to have a flexible teaching schedule. A sense of humor is a must and the teacher also must be willing to recognize that there are times when nothing can be done.[22]

Teachers who have slow learners in their classrooms must have certain basic attitudes. First, the teacher must take a positive rather than a negative attitude toward the slow learner. She must accept the child for what she is, realizing that the slow learner is more like other students than she is different from them. The differences, however, must be faced realistically.

Some teachers may regard it as a "raw deal" or some type of punishment if they are assigned slow learning classes. The students are extremely sensitive to teachers' attitudes and they estimate their teachers' attitudes very quickly and with remarkable accuracy. As is the teacher, so is the class of slow learners. A bad attitude on the part of the teacher will be reflected in

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[21] NEA-DHE, op. cit., p. 7.

[22] Liggett, M. and Sellers, B., op. cit., pgs. 359-360.

the number of problems she will have with the class. If a teacher finds that she cannot maintain a positive attitude, she should avoid responsibility for these slow learning classes if there is any choice at all in the matter. Since most teachers have little or no choice in the matter, the teacher should make every effort to improve her own attitudes in order to achieve any degree of success in working with slow learners. A teacher who likes students, believes in their worth-whileness, and has faith in them, will be readily recognized by the slow learner and this student will usually put forth a maximum of effort in order to please the teacher.

The attitude of the other students in the classroom toward the slow learner is also important. The slow learner does not want sympathy that might increase her sense of inferiority, but she does want respect. More emphasis should be placed on what the child can do, rather than on what she cannot do. By the teacher's considerate and courteous treatment of each child, the teacher will encourage similar attitudes toward each other from the children.

The attitude of the slow learning student toward the teacher is much more important than the attitude of the other students toward the teacher. The slow child needs to accept not only the teacher, but also the school. As a result of unpleasant past experiences, slow learners may have deep negative feelings toward school and teachers in general. The teacher must make every effort to help the slow learner accept first the teacher, and through the teacher, the school.

Also to be considered is the attitude of the slow learner's family. The family may resent and misunderstand the slow learner, thinking that the child's academic failure is the result of laziness or defiance. The parent must understand that the child is not capable of better work and that this child should not be unfairly compared to others.

Probably the teacher's greatest contribution to the best development of slow learning children, is her skill in teaching. Of course skill comes with experience, but all too often a well-meaning teacher will recognize some special ability, such as drawing, in a slow child and will allow the child to do this to the neglect of other learning. These children need a well balanced program suited to their needs and abilities, not special concentration on only one facet of their total abilities.

Almost as important as the teacher's skill in teaching is the need for a broader cultural background and a higher general intelligence than is needed in teaching average children. On first thought one may wonder why these two qualities are necessary to teach slow learning children. A teacher may, however, often find her knowledge and ingenuity taxed to the limit when trying to devise new materials and methods that will keep these pupils interested and willing to learn.

The teacher is responsible for creating a classroom climate and the student will react favorably or unfavorably in accordance with this climate. It is the duty of the teacher to create a classroom atmosphere that will be conducive to learning. The teacher motivates the pupil to learn and the slow learner will quickly respond to a teacher who creates an atmosphere of understanding and patience. Dr. Frederick Allen, psychiatric consultant to the School District of Philadelphia, suggests a combination of "the Four F's" that are essential for creating a healthy classroom climate. These "four F's" are: Friendliness, Fairness, Firmness, and Fun.[23] If the right kind of climate is established, the teacher will discover that the majority of slow learners are responsive to instruction and that they do learn.

There is an evident need for teachers to be given more specialized training in working with the slow learner. All teacher-training programs should include a course in working with slow learning students. These courses should be based on the available research on the slow learner, and should be taught by persons who have had both training and experience in this area. Since many present teachers have had little or no training in teaching the slow learner, perhaps this training could be handled through in-service or workshop programs dedicated to this purpose.

Teachers recently surveyed in regard to slow learners listed the following college courses they thought would be most valuable to prospective teachers of slow learners:

1. Methods and materials for teaching slow learners.
2. Remedial and diagnostic reading.
3. Developmental reading.
4. Guidance and counseling.
5. The psychology of handicapped children.
6. Audio-visual aids.
7. Introduction to education of exceptional children and youth.
8. Tests and measurements.[24]

In addition, the same teachers seemed to favor the locally based efforts to improve instruction, listing the use of student-needs studies, special

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[23] Philadelphia Public Schools, Curriculum Div., Key to Teaching Slow Learners in the High School (Philadelphia: 1959), p. 2.

[24] New Jersey Secondary Teachers Assoc., op. cit., p. 49.

consultants, and local in-service workshops as more valuable than enrolling in college courses or attending regional and state conferences.

Phillips suggests the following guides for new teachers to remember when working with slow learners:

1. Boys and girls with little learning ability often form a strong dislike for school because of humiliation felt at being unable to compete in classroom situations.

2. It is necessary to stimulate such boys and girls to mental effort for a purpose.

3. Slow learners may be restless. If reached by teachers in time, they will not become incorrigible.

4. Pride in accomplishment is an absolute necessity for the slow learner.

5. Teachers should search for those things which the slow learner takes pride in doing and make a concentrated effort to transfer this pride to the learning field where progress is required.

6. Teachers should keep constantly in mind that those who are only slow will work to their full capacity. Such is not the case with the indifferent or rebellious learner.[25]

New teachers may inadvertently fall into the error of making slow learners unnecessarily conspicuous before the class. This type of limelight can be bad for any child. The teacher in a heterogenous classroom should not limit her attention only to the slow learner, for the good teacher teaches all of the pupils all of the time.

Many times there is pressure on the teacher to bring the below-average pupil up to class norms. The teacher is often aware that she may be the target of criticism from parents, principals, and later teachers of the child because of the child's academic difficulties and deficiencies.

Some teachers who have taught for many years in the last two or three years of an academic high school may have had little first hand experience with large numbers of slow learners. Therefore they may be unaware of the problems of the slow learner and how to deal with these problems. Also, because of their own cultural conditioning, such teachers may not be able to recognize the vocational and leisure-time needs of the slow learners.

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[25] Phillips, C. A., Working with slow learners, Catholic School Journal, 61:65, 1961

Just as a teacher may view the slow learner as her special problem, a slow learner often sees the teacher and the classroom situation as her special problem. A teacher should think of herself in the slow learner's place occasionally, feeling as one who makes an honest effort and still fails or as one who is constantly expected to do work that is beyond her grasp; perhaps then the teacher can understand the importance of tailoring the curriculum to various levels in order to make school an important educational experience for the slow learner.

The selection of teachers for the slow learning classes is an administrative problem. All students need able teachers; but it is particularly important that the slow learners have teachers who want to teach them and will understand their problems. A teacher who is impatient, rigid, poorly adjusted, and lacking a sense of humor would probably not be a successful teacher of slow learning children.

## WORKING WITH THE SLOW LEARNER

In working with the slow learner, it must be kept in mind that each child is an individual and not just a typical member of a group. As an individual, this child deserves to be given the same courtesies, understanding, consideration and respect as any other individual, regardless of ability. Many teachers, consciously or unconsciously, display a difference in their feelings, attitude, and treatment in favor of good students. This may be a natural human tendency; but to the slow learner who is sensitive to her treatment in comparison with other students, these differences will soon be noticed.

The slow learner perhaps needs more understanding than any other child. Many educators feel that the gifted child is the most neglected, and if this is so, then it can be said also that the slow learner has received more attention in the wrong way than any other child. The slow learner has not been neglected; but this child has certainly been misunderstood. The slow learner usually has many problems in school and these problems will tend to be more numerous and serious than those of the average child. Therefore, the need for understanding is imperative. Ingram goes as far as to state, "Understanding children is of prime importance, and subject matter is secondary."[26]

A classroom teacher should not try to fight the battle of the slow learner alone. Most slow learners are well known to the guidance counselors and they will be able to provide helpful information. Also, the teacher should investigate the student's personal folder which will be available in the files of the guidance office.

In addition to guidance counselors, it is wise to seek help from other teachers who know these pupils, the school nurse, the librarian, and the remedial reading teacher. The teacher should find out, as early as possible, as much information as is available on the slow learners in her classroom. The teacher must also discover, as soon as possible, the varying achievement levels of these students.

Since grouping of slow learners is largely handled by the administration or guidance department, homemaking teachers may have little or nothing to do with this aspect. However, it seems that the authorities in this field do not agree on whether the slow learner should be taught in a special class or whether this child should be taught in a regular heterogeneous class. There seems to be argument for both schools of thought, although this is usually a matter for the individual school to decide. At the junior and senior high levels, there seems to be a trend toward grouping the slow learners together in special

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[26] Ingram, C., Education of the Slow Learning Child (New York: The Ronald Press, 1935), p. 412.

classes or sections. These groups may be taught by regular or special-education teachers. Any plan such as this, however, should provide opportunity for these children to be integrated with children of varying abilities, at certain times of the day. Many times these students will be grouped homogeneously in areas of English, social studies, mathematics and science, and heterogeneously in such areas as physical education, homemaking, art and shop.

In regard to the special vs. regular class grouping, Strang has this to say:

> Whether to place slow-learning children in special or in regular classes is still a disputed question. Both plans have advantages. Having the slow learners in a special class is easier for teachers. They have smaller numbers of pupils, more special materials and equipment, and less responsibility for meeting the needs of a wide range of interests and abilities.
>
> Being in a special class has been found to increase the slow learner's self-confidence and self-esteem; he is not constantly made aware of his brighter classmates. He is given more individual attention. As one youngster said, "In the small class we can learn what we need to know, not what everyone else needs to know."
>
> On the other hand, being in a regular class may stimulate the slow-learning child to do his best to keep up with some of the more able learners. And, of course, it removes whatever stigma may be attached to being in a special class.
>
> The conflicting results of research on this issue are due in part to differences in teachers' personalities and skills in both forms of organization. In either type of grouping, understanding the individual pupils, creating a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning, and skill in helping children to learn without unnecessary failure are essential.[27]

In any case, a well planned program will show coordination from kindergarden through high school.

The curriculum for the slow learner is similar to that of the average pupil, but adapted to the special nature of slow student's learning process. The lower the child's ability, the greater the need for a program that is different from that of the average. Slow learners should also have their own separate standards of marking and promotion.

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[27]Strang, R., Teaching slow-learning children in the elementary school, Education, 81:338, 1961

Classes of slow learners should be small enough to give individual attention to each pupil. When slow learners are placed in a group with average and bright pupils, the teacher must plan activities and projects suitable for each type of student.

The approach to instruction with slow learners must be mature and business-like. The presentation must be on the level of the students, no matter how simple the content. Classroom activities must be worthwhile and meaningful. The classroom language should be simple and direct. There should be frequent evaluation of progress. Pupils should also be trained to evaluate themselves. Praise for successes, large or small, should be sincere. Suggested hints on classroom management will be found in the Appendix on page 36.

Instruction goals should be clearly stated. They should be concrete and attainable at every level of the slow learner's education. Short-time goals will be more effective than long-time goals because students will be able to reach them in a short period of time and feel some immediate sense of accomplishment.

Slow learners learn more effectively when they are active participants in the learning situation. Methods and materials used must be within their comprehension. Filmstrips, films, field trips, exhibits, demonstrations and group activities all tend to give more meaning to the learning situation. Activities must be carefully planned and organized in such a way as to insure some degree of accomplishment and success for the slow learner. Emphasis should be given to learning in concrete situations.

Hansen suggests the following teaching techniques for teachers of slow learning children:

1. Find the student's center of interest.

2. Be definite in making assignments.

3. Make connections between the lesson and experience. Any good teacher is an expert at connection-making.

4. Repeat for over-mastery.

5. Respect, do not patronize, the slow learner as a person.

6. Use all known avenues to learning.

7. Be sure that the child feels successful.[28]

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[28]Hansen, C. F., How can the school best provide for the slow learner?, Bulletin of the National Assoc. of Secondary-School Principals, 41 (No.228): 79-81, Apr., 1957, p. 81.

Since most slow learners will eventually hold semi-skilled or unskilled jobs, they must be taught good work habits and attitudes such as cooperation, willingness to work, job responsibility, initiative, and acceptance of supervision.

If these slow learning pupils are treated with respect and given responsibilities within their capacities, by a teacher who is sincerely interested, friendly and willing to help, these students will be well on the road to preparation for a successful adult life.

## THE SLOW LEARNERS IN THE HOMEMAKING CLASS

The homemaking teacher is in a position to give the slow learners more help than most of the other teachers. In the relatively informal classroom atmosphere and with the emphasis on individual help and guidance, homemaking teachers have a real opportunity to give the slow learners the type of attention and training they need.

Since slow learners tend to marry early, homemaking education not only can be extremely helpful, but also very meaningful to them. It is important that courses be offered so the slow learner is able to finish school with a preparation that will help her assume adult responsibility as a family member, wage earner, and citizen. Certainly homemaking courses, with their emphasis on home and family living, are important in achieving this desired end.

Many homemaking teachers feel that the homemaking classes have become a "dumping ground" for slow learners. In a recent survey in Ohio, however, it was found that there was no difference in the proportion of slow learners to average and better than average students and that home economics classes do not have excessive numbers of slow learners when compared to normal class distribution. In the same survey, teachers reported that the most frequent practice was to enroll slow learners in regular home economics classes. About 65 per cent of the teachers stated, however, that they would prefer to have these students in separate classes. It was found that there was a direct relationship between a preference for separate classes and the number of years of experience. About 50 per cent of the teachers with over 10 years of experience preferred to teach slow learners in regular classes and 75 per cent of the teachers with less than five years of experience preferred to teach them in separate classes.[29]

Many teachers might disagree with the findings of this survey, and perhaps results would be different in other parts of the country. There is a great need for more research of this type to determine just where the slow learner does fit into the homemaking program.

It was further found in the above survey that the teachers now working with slow learners have little or no training or experience in dealing with slow learners. This would seem to be a wide-spread problem among homemaking teachers, and teachers in general. All homemaking teachers should have more preparation for working with special types of children as part of their college preparation for teaching. Too often, a new teacher, fresh from

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[29]Sellers, B., and Liggett, M., Slow learners, Journal of Home Economics, 54:23, 1962, p. 24.

college, starts teaching expecting a certain type of student, and is very frustrated when she is faced with a student who is entirely different.

Homemaking teachers who are to work particularly with slow students in special classes need additional training and experiences. Much more research is also needed to provide suitable materials to use with the slow learning student in the classroom.

## TEACHING HOMEMAKING TO THE SLOW LEARNER

Homemaking teachers should feel fortunate that they have more to offer all students in education for living than most other departments in the school. The homemaking teacher also has much more to offer to the slow learning students. Through her education in homemaking, the slow learner especially can learn to live better and more wisely in the environment in which she finds herself.

In working with slow learners it would be well to keep in mind certain goals:

1. To develop in these students a sense of the importance of keeping physically fit

2. To encourage and teach students to think and to develop their thinking to their own capacity

3. To develop in students an ease and pleasure in social relationships with others by encouraging interest and understanding of social and civic affairs

4. To develop in students the ability to plan for and to use leisure time

5. To develop an interest and desire in students to live as contributing citizens in their families and communities

6. To develop students' abilities to earn what is needed for life necessities and to use their earnings wisely

7. To develop in students an ability to weigh factors leading to appropriate and inappropriate action in a given situation[30]

Specifically, homemaking teachers have expressed the following goals that would deal more directly with the slow learning student in the homemaking class:

1. Development of the ability to get along with other people

2. Development of the ability to make and keep friends

3. Establishment of habits of good grooming

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[30]Liggett, M., and Sellers, B., op. cit., p. 358.

4. Establishment and maintenance of safety habits

5. Development of good habits of work

6. Development of qualities of good citizenship

7. Development of a wise attitude in the use of money

8. Development of a set of values (This has to be taught since slow learners do not readily pick this up as do average children.)

9. Development of the ability to accept personal limitations without frustrations and unhappiness

10. Encouragement and help in developing some basic skills[31]

In teaching homemaking to slow learners, all six areas should be included, as with average and above average students. These six areas are:

1. Child care and development

2. Clothing, textiles and personal care

3. Foods and nutrition

4. Money management and consumer education

5. Home management, housing, furnishings and equipment

6. Personal and family living

Since slow learners tend to marry so early, pupils need to learn how to make wise choices and how to care for the needs of a family. Real life problems, similar to those the students will most likely face, should be given prime consideration.

It should be remembered when working with the slow learner that she is an individual with feelings and needs like those of any other individual. Though she may lack in talents and promise, she has every right to expect the type of guidance and instruction that will help her to grow and develop to her fullest capacity.

Successful teaching of the slow learner should be evident if the teaching is done in simple, practical terms, using real experiences, and remembering

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[31] Liggett, M., and Sellers, B., op. cit., p. 359

that the slow learner does not transfer learning from one situation to another. Everything the slow learner learns, must be taught on an individual basis.

In working with slow learners in homemaking classes, an effective program stresses direct methods with concrete materials, information given on the slow-learner's level, meaningful experiences, and well organized procedures.

Methods successfully used with slow learners are those in which there is activity. Activity is important in developing and holding interest. Slow learners are concerned about themselves, their appearance, and their lives in general. Role-playing is often effective because it gives the child an opportunity to act out real life situations. Slow learners enjoy demonstrations and especially like to assist with demonstrations. These demonstrations, however, should proceed in clearly defined steps. Field trips and excursions should be related to their daily lives. A trip to the local grocery store to compare prices or to see what products are available would be more meaningful than a visit to a food processing plant. Films and filmstrips should deal with concrete, everyday things with which they are familiar. Slow learning pupils enjoy making notebooks and scrapbooks and arranging displays. Pictures, when used directly or projected, should definitely be related to the subject being discussed and not too many should be shown at one time.

Games make learning fun and hold student interest. The flannel board and magnetic boards offer a wide variety of possibilities for effective teaching. Guest speakers are good when they relate what they have to say to the interests of the students. A classroom question-box may prove helpful in determining student problems. The class discussion period may also be a means of bringing forth problems for solution. A really creative teacher can invent new methods of presenting subject matter in an effective way.

The materials and equipment used by the slow learners should be things with which they are familiar. These students should be taught to use a minimum of equipment efficiently. Too many "gadgets" will be confusing, and it is important that slow learners become familiar with the basic equipment that they will need in their future homes.

The subject matter offered should always be on the level of the slow learner. The teacher should begin each lesson with a review of the last. She should go over things again if they are not clearly understood. The teacher should always alternate subject matter with learning activities as a change of pace will help hold student interest. Since slow learners usually have difficulty with symbols, these terms should be written on the board or shown with pictures. The specialized vocabulary in homemaking may be confusing to slow learners. The word "yoke" in clothing may be confused with "yolk" in foods, for example. Other words such as "baste" will have to be carefully explained because of the different meaning of the word in foods and clothing.

Too many ideas should not be introduced at one time because this also tends to confuse the slow learner.

There is a definite need for textbooks to use with the slow learner. Since there are no texts at present, the teacher must rely on regular texts, reference books, pamphlets, and current newspaper articles for materials to teach this child.

Teachers may want to write supplementary materials themselves. If so, Featherstone suggests the following procedures for preparing supplementary materials for use with the slow learner:

> First, of course, it is necessary to decide what kind of material is needed - whether a story, an informational article, or perhaps directions for making or doing something.
>
> Second, write the material in your best, most natural style. This will help to avoid a stereotyped or artificial style and obvious "writing down". Aim at a level of difficulty and comprehension about a grade or a year below the level at which you expect the material to be read with reasonable ease. You will probably be about a grade too high even then. Do not worry too much about vocabulary or complexity of sentences at this stage.
>
> Third, revise the first draft as follows: (1) Check the sentence length and structure. Never use a compound or complex sentence when a simple sentence will suffice. Rewrite all inverted sentences. (2) Check the vocabulary. (Use only words with which the students will be familiar.)
>
> Fourth, try out your material with a few pupils whose reading abilities are representative of the group as a whole.
>
> Fifth, if the material seems to "work" well with these pupils, mimeograph or otherwise duplicate it, taking pains to avoid typographical errors, smudging, crowding on the page, and other faults that detract from appearance and readability.[32]

Experiences should be meaningful to the students because of their inability to grasp abstract things. Sensory experiences - things they can see, hear, feel, touch, taste, and smell mean something to the slow learning students. All laboratory experience should be a first-hand type of experience in which the pupils have contact with real things.

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[32]Featherstone, W. B., op. cit., p. 81-83.

Slow learners should have more laboratory experiences than the average or above average homemaking student. Emphasis should be on short projects that can be completed in a short period of time, and will give some feeling of accomplishment and success. A list of suggested activities and emphasis for each area of homemaking education will be found on page 32 in the Appendix.

Since slow learning students are known to have a slow rate of learning, it is wise to allow enough time for each phase of the lesson. Experiences and activities should be developed slowly, giving enough time for the first step to be grasped, before going on to the second. It is important to help slow learners remember what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. All directions must be simple and explicit, given in a simple vocabulary, and repeated if necessary. Teachers must also emphasize and praise good work habits, cleanliness, and accuracy. Slow learners need to be checked, rechecked, and reassured often.

Slow learners often seek responsibility and enjoy doing the endless tasks involved in the care of the homemaking rooms. They do not get bored easily when the activity is satisfying to them. Every effort should be made to see that the slow learners have an opportunity to accept some type of responsibility within their capabilities. This is one way in which they can experience success.

It is important that all procedures used with the slow learners be well organized. A teacher cannot feel that she need not prepare lessons because the students are not alert enough to know the difference. Careful planning is necessary to arouse and sustain interest and a wide variety of activities must be made available to the slow learning student.

The teacher must encourage each child to do as much as her ability permits. Special extra help may be necessary after school. Pupils should be encouraged to do home projects that will relate to class projects. These home projects should also be simple and may require the cooperation of the parents in planning and doing.

Since there is a need for frequent evaluation of progress, this can perhaps be handled in individual conferences. These do not have to be formal, but could be included when giving individual instructions or help.

When slow learners are found in a class of average or above average students, the teacher must carefully plan activities that will help the slow learner and not make her feel that she is being left behind. Because of the opportunities for individual help and the wide range of activities possible in the homemaking class, these students can usually be handled quite successfully in classes of mixed ability.

To summarize, the learning experiences of the homemaking program for slow learners must assist the student to plan; to use past experiences; to make wise choices; to organize work; to accept responsibility; to develop

consideration for others; to work co-operatively with others; and to have the satisfactions of accomplishments, recognition, and a sense of worthwhileness to himself and others.[33]

[33]New Jersey Secondary Teachers Assoc., op. cit., p. 69.

## CONCLUSION

What then is the future of the slow learner? What will become of her when she leaves the school and her formal education comes to an end?

Because the slow learner is a potential drop-out, this child has a strong need for early vocational guidance at the ninth and tenth grade levels. It is the school's responsibility to serve the slow learner either by providing the child with a constructive, meaningful program, thereby encouraging her to stay in school, or by more adequately preparing her for life if she does drop out.

Many people, including some educators, have advocated that the slow learner should not be allowed to graduate from the secondary school. These people believe that high academic standards should be maintained. Apparently these people have forgotten that the public schools are indeed public, and they are committed to educate each child to the limit of his ability. This commitment includes the slow learning child. Imagine what would happen to our society if every student now in high school continued on to college and upon graduation immediately entered one of the professions. Skilled and unskilled workers are indeed needed and are extremely important for the effective functioning of our modern-day society.

Many slow learners are to be found among the workers and artisans of adult life. Since these people are indeed contributing their share to our society, they should not be denied the benefits of a high school education. Diplomas are granted each year to average and gifted students who do not work up to the level of their potential. Considering this, there is no basis on which a diploma can be denied to the slow learners, if these slow learners have achieved the limit of their abilities.

Some persons might argue that if the slow learners finish high school, they will want to go on to college. However, if slow learners have been given the proper guidance, and if they know their limitations - and most of them do - they will not want to try college.

Realistic work programs, in connection with the slow learner's curriculum, may be the answer to preparing this student for her vocational future. This type of program has been tried successfully in a number of schools and should not be overlooked when planning a program for slow learners. Barber has made the following suggestions for planning this type of program with low-ability youth. Gratifying results can be obtained when:

1. Students are helped to realistically appraise both their potentials and their limitations; to overcome unfortunate personal traits and to build characteristics that can compensate somewhat

for physical and mental handicaps; to learn to perform well some useful function, no matter how simple

2. Community and governmental agencies are linked to the school program for counseling and training

3. Business, labor, and industry are informed about the school's programs, and join co-operatively in developing the potential contributions which the low-skilled can eventually make.[34]

In this type of program the employment needs of the community are surveyed and programs are worked out in the schools to prepare students for the types of jobs available. In planning programs for the educable retarded students, time may be allowed during the school day for students to receive actual on-the-job training. This type of program should also be considered for the slow learners.

In the homemaking curriculum, slow learning students can be prepared for a profitable future. As a result of intelligently guided experiences in foods classes, a slow learner can perhaps serve functionally as a waitress or a salad girl in a restaurant. Experiences, or a course in home nursing may help the pupil become a very adequate nurse's aide in a hospital. Clothing experiences and a knowledge of personal relations and consumer education may help a girl to become a successful salesperson. Child care knowledge and experiences may lead to permanent child care or baby-sitting jobs. Home management and a knowledge of cleaning techniques may help a student to become a more desirable domestic helper. Some slow learners may go on to beautician schools or train to be practical nurses. Their homemaking courses in high school should provide a valuable background for this type of training.

Certainly more must be done in this area of vocational guidance for the slow learner. More attention to this problem is needed; but basic knowledge and experiences for many types of jobs can be found within the homemaking curriculum.

The homemaking teacher faces a real challenge when she is working with slow learners. No other teacher is so well equipped to give these students the information and experiences they will really need in their adult lives. Homemaking education can provide the simple, concrete, and immediately useful experiences they will need to become self-reliant and worthy individuals and citizens.

Since our nation must have citizens who are capable of making intelligent decisions, the education of slow learning children is of major importance

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[34]Barber, G. A., Guiding the low-ability student, NEA Journal, 50 (No. 3) : 38-9, Mar. 1961, p. 39.

in an American democracy. These students will marry and make homes, cast votes, hold jobs, participate in organizations, and rear the citizens of the future. What they will become and the ideals they develop are vital to our national welfare. It is wise to keep in mind that the types of homes they will have will depend greatly on what the homemaking teacher has given them during their school years. The slow learner who has had the benefit of a good education suited to her needs and abilities is a fortunate person. It is hard to single out a slow learning adult, if she has had a good basic education as a youngster.

As Dr. Featherstone says, . . . "one must never forget that the slow learner is no less a 'person', no less an individual than any other human being . . . he, too, must be helped to stand on his own feet and face the world, self-reliant and unafraid."[35] Each and every homemaking teacher with slow learning students must accept this challenge!

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[35]Featherstone, W. B., op. cit., p. 118.

# APPENDIX

## A. SUGGESTED EMPHASIS AND ACTIVITIES FOR SLOW LEARNERS IN THE SIX AREAS OF HOMEMAKING EDUCATION

### 1. Child Care and Development

Emphasis: the needs of infants and small children, their growth and development, and their care.

Activities:

1. Invite small children to class so the pupils may observe their actions and reactions.

2. Have a new young mother - perhaps a former slow learning student - bring her baby to class to demonstrate care of the infant.

3. Role-play to act out duties and problems of baby-sitters.

4. Visit a hospital nursery to observe new-born infants, if hospital will permit.

5. Visit a nursery school or kindergarden to observe small children.

6. Have pupils find pictures to illustrate a children's story, then tell the story using the pictures.

7. Have pupils make scrapbooks of pictures that would appeal to children. These scrapbooks may be given to hospitals or to individual children.

### 2. Clothing, Textiles, and Personal Cars

Emphasis: grooming, choice and care of clothing for the individual and the family, simple altering and remodeling of clothing, basic textiles, and sewing techniques.

Activities:

1. Guest speakers on health and grooming to demonstrate hair care and styling (beautician), care of the teeth (dentist), good health practices (school nurse), correct use of make-up (cosmetician), etc.

2. Students make good grooming notebooks with many pictures and a minimum of writing.

3. Allow students to try different hair styles, give themselves manicures, and experiment with make-up in class. They can even bring their tooth brushes and toothpaste and go to the girls-room for a tooth care session, or bring soap and a towel to give themselves a facial.

4. Visit a nearby fabric store to see what is currently available. Plan a basic textile unit as a result of this field trip.

5. Compare ready-to-wear garments at low cost levels. Visit a store or bring in actual garments so the students may see what qualities to look for when buying clothing.

6. Demonstrate taking up a skirt hem and letting one out. Also demonstrate simple repairs of clothing and methods of clothing care. Let students practice these on actual articles of clothing.

7. Have students demonstrate and practice simple stain removal procedures.

8. Guide students in choosing simple clothing projects that are within their abilities and can be completed in a short period of time.

9. Don't overlook handicrafts as many slow learners like to knit, crochet, and embroider.

10. Resource folders, showing illustrated steps in sewing techniques, are very helpful to slow learning students.

11. Have students collect current fashion pictures, using mail-order catalogs and teen-age magazines.

12. Use radio-scopic cards to show grooming problems. Paste pictures or drawings of grooming problems on sheets of cardboard or construction paper. Have pupils identify problems and offer solutions.

3. Money Management and Consumer Education

Emphasis: personal spending habits, the family's financial needs, wise buying now and in the future.

Activities:

1. Have students compare costs of teen-age cosmetics, snacks, school supplies, etc.

2. Invite a young, newly-married couple to visit class and answer questions on money management and the cost of setting up a home.

3. Use mail-order catalogs to determine current prices of basic home needs. Newspapers can also be used for this.

4. Investigate the use of credit and teen-age charge accounts.

5. Compare costs and uses of various household appliances.

6. Read and compare different types of labels.

7. Set up a "store" in the classroom. Allow students a certain amount of "money" and help them determine how far this money would go in meeting their own personal needs and those of a family.

4. Foods and Nutrition

Emphasis: basic family nutrition needs, use of basic equipment, basic techniques in food preparation, and family meal planning and food purchasing.

Activities:

1. Use colorful food pictures to show basic nutritional needs. Relate these needs to the foods themselves instead of emphasizing abstract terms such as "vitamins", etc. Pupils understand nutrition better when concrete things such as the foods in the Basic Four are stressed.

2. Demonstrate measuring techniques and use of basic equipment. Students may assist with this.

3. Allow students to help with demonstrations of food preparation.

4. Invite commercial demonstrators from utility companies to show how the large equipment and appliances are used and cared for, and the advantages and disadvantages of different types.

5. Give each student a definite responsibility during the foods laboratory session.

6. Have a "tasting party" to introduce new foods.

7. Encourage pupils to make original table centerpieces and arrangements.

8. Use Bingo-type games and crossword puzzles in teaching and evaluating basic foods or equipment.

9. Have older students visit cafeteria and if possible have them assist in the cafeteria for a week or so to gain experience in quantity foods work.

10. Have a nutrition experiment using white mice or hamsters. This would have to be on a simple basis.

5. Home Management, Housing, Furnishings and Equipment

Emphasis: care of a home, types of housing available, cost of housing, choosing furnishings and equipment, beauty in the home.

Activities:

1. Time-and-motion studies of table setting, doing dishes, etc.

2. Have students demonstrate various cleaning techniques.

3. Invite a florist to demonstrate arrangement of flowers. Let students practice this, using flowers locally available.

4. Have a small flower or vegetable garden on school grounds. Let slow learners care for this garden.

5. Give students responsibilities in the care of the homemaking rooms such as watering plants, straightening closets and drawers, etc.

6. Have a classroom "pet" such as a turtle or goldfish. Let the slow learners be responsible for the care of this "pet".

7. Visit low-cost model homes in the community to see what types of housing are available. Also investigate mobile homes.

8. Have pupils do room decoration projects using cardboard boxes and cardboard furniture. Old wallpaper books and construction paper can be used for the walls and floors. Scraps of materials can be used for curtains, upholstery and accessories.

6. Personal and Family Relationships

Emphasis: getting along with others in personal and family relations.

Activities:

1. Role-play to determine pupils problems with peers and family members.

2. Use a question-box for boy-girl relationship problems.

3. Show filmstrips on dating and preparation for marriage, such as the Dating Topics for Young Teens, and Dating Topics for Older Teens series. (These sets consist of four color filmstrips and two records each and are available from: Society for Visual Education, Inc., Dept. W-31, 1345 Diversey Street, Chicago 14, Ill., at $25.50 per set.)

4. Have family fun days. Pupils group together in families and plan a series of fun days, emphasizing family games, music, vacations, picnics, etc. Students actually play games, listen to good family type music, show slides of trips taken, and go on a picnic.

5. Read aloud to students current articles on personal problems and relationships from teen-age magazines and newspapers.

B. HINTS ON CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT[36]

1. Establishing a Well-ordered Classroom

A. Examine pupils' cumulative records before meeting the class. Become aware--but without prejudice--of probable lowest achievers and of possible trouble-makers. Look for positive, as well as negative items in the records, and for comments that may help to explain deviant behavior (such as broken home, ill health, financial deprivation, etc.).

B. Learn to identify pupils by name as quickly as possible.

C. Seat pupils in "permanent" seats on first day. A seating chart will be helpful. Seats should, of course, be changed for good and sufficient reason, such as discovery of defective vision or hearing.

D. Use diagnostic procedures (standardized tests, or informal teacher-constructed tests) to supplement cumulative records and to determine achievement levels. (Diagnosis is a continuing process and there is no diagnostic procedure which is an adequate substitute for intelligent and sensitive observation by the teacher of the class.)

E. Explain rules and regulations. If the group is sufficiently mature, pupils should discuss and make suggestions.

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[36] The Key to Teaching Slow Learners in the High School, Philadelphia Public Schools, Curriculum Div., (Philadelphia, 1959), p. 5.

I I. Maintaining a Well-ordered Classroom

A. Keep classroom regulations as brief and as simple as possible, but be sure that they are understood, and insist that they be followed. Be firm, but not rigid. Temper justice with generosity and common sense.

B. Require that necessary equipment, such as pencils and notebook, be brought to class each day.

C. Use the blackboard.

1. Have program for the day (and perhaps an outline of program for the week, or even for the rating period) written on the board. Read this with the pupils. Invite questions, and explain where necessary.

2. Begin each period, if it seems wise, with a brief written lesson, directions for which the pupils find on the board as they enter the room.

3. Do not cover the board completely with lengthy written directions and assignments. This can be overwhelming and discouraging.

D. Make brief homework assignments. Make sure that directions are clear and simple, and that the work is something the pupils can do.

E. Keep in an accessible place a class assignment book which pupils must consult after an absence.

F. Keep on file, also in an accessible place, a manila folder for each pupil, containing his written work, so that he may see what he has accomplished and what progress he has made. This may supplement, but need not be a substitute for, the pupil's notebook.

G. Establish a weekly routine, and follow it.

H. Set reasonable standards of work

1. Insist on neat and careful work.

2. Give recognition for careful work, and lower marks for careless work. But remember that some slow learners are actually unable to practice neatness without long and arduous training.

3. Provide for the pupil who can do more and better work than the others in the group. Give him, not merely additional assignments, but assignments requiring more thought and responsibility.

4. Give assignments that make it possible for the less able pupils to achieve something and to have a real sense of accomplishment.

5. Be ready to recommend for another course any pupil whose level of achievement is above that expected from the group.

I. Provide plenty of work for everybody to do, but provide also for moments of relaxation. Constant pressure will result in tension, which may in turn result in outbursts of disorder.

J. Give plenty of repetitive practice and drill. The slow learner needs and likes this. Drill should be for a purpose, and should be supervised and corrected. It should not be "busy work".

K. Be on the alert for wandering attention and poor powers of concentration, but be ready to give help whenever activities are changed in the course of a period. The low mental ability pupil is frequently characterized by a fondness for routine work and by a rigidity which makes it difficult for him to shift independently from one task to another. On the other hand, like everyone else he finds it difficult, and often impossible, to keep his mind on what is dull, or meaningless to him. In many phases of his classroom work he reaches frustration level quickly. He is often the victim of distractibility. He will find it easier to concentrate if his work is meaningful and interesting and on an appropriate instructional level, and if distracting stimuli are kept to a minimum.

L. The relaxed and comfortable teacher means a relaxed and comfortable class. However, do not confuse lack of dignity with relaxation. The slow learner needs, and usually desires, strong adult guidance which he can respect.

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